

**CLASSROOM INTERACTION IN
UNIVERSITY SETTINGS:
A CASE STUDY OF LANGUAGE
TEACHING AND LEARNING**

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**A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the
degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Faculty of School of
Education Central Queensland University Rockhampton**

March 2003

ABSTRACT

This thesis is about the social and cultural contexts of pedagogical practices in selected Australian university Korean language programs. The focus of the empirical work reported in this thesis is the description and interpretation of the social activities constructed by categories of students, defined by their cultural background, and native Korean-speaking lecturers in goal-oriented pedagogies. The empirical work centres on the interaction between perceptions of teachers' expectations on the part of students and on the cultural attributes of their teachers. In order to accomplish this outcome, the thesis draws on the concepts of social interactionism formulated by symbolic interactionism and the school classroom analyses of Hargreaves (1972) and Nash (1979). These concepts are embedded in the theoretical framework of 'visible' and 'invisible' pedagogies first formulated by Bernstein (1973, 1990).

The empirical work, undertaken in two fieldwork periods in two Australian universities during 1998 and 1999, made use of formal and informal interviewing and observation to generate a data-base. A questionnaire survey of students was conducted near the end of the second fieldwork period, and replicated in 2002, to corroborate the qualitative data-based interpretations.

The main finding is that the interaction of the cultural backgrounds of students and teachers constantly affect classroom interaction in the Korean language classroom. The cultural framing of classroom life has special significance for Korean-background students who perceive that they are expected to perform

constantly at a high level by their Korean teachers. Conversely, Australian students, while they evaluate their teachers positively, react to a perceived lack of high expectation on the part of their Korean teachers. Nevertheless, Australian students perceive that they receive positive expectations from their Korean teachers. In theoretical terms, the study provides evidence that the classroom interaction models proposed by Hargreaves and Bernstein in the schools sector have salience in higher education. Moreover, the fieldwork shows that while there is an identifiable classroom pressure to reach defined learning outcomes predicted by the 'visible' pedagogy model, there are culturally-based criteria used by teachers for judging the performance of students. This 'invisible' pedagogy affects the motivation of students in the observed classrooms so that the Korean background students and other Asian students perceive the classroom to be flexible yet demanding, while Australian students perceive it to be easy-going yet challenging. In short, the research demonstrates that Korean language teachers display logical expectations of productivity and standards through culturally desired expectations.

This thesis is the first study of social interaction in an Australian Asian language teaching setting. There is sufficient evidence in the thesis to suggest that there is a productive future research agenda in the analysis of the effects of expectations and consequential levels of motivation and language competency of Asian language learners in Australian universities.

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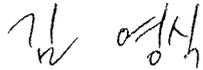
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My special thanks go to all the students and teachers involved in this study. They were willing to spend time with me during the stage of data collection and gave their time voluntarily. Without their valuable input this study would not have been possible.

DECLARATION

To the best of my knowledge and belief, the work presented in this thesis is completely original, except where acknowledged in the text. The material has not been submitted for a degree at this or any other University. I have personally sighted all works referred to in the text and references.



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March 2003